

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

**Application No :** 11/01483/FULL1

**Ward:**  
**Hayes And Coney Hall**

**Address :** Elm Farm Cottage Nash Lane Keston  
BR2 6AP

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 540449 N: 163949

**Applicant :** Mr Bob Harvey

**Objections :** YES

**Description of Development:**

Conversion of barn adjacent to Elm Farm Cottage into 1 two bedroom dwelling house

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Nash

Areas of Archeological Significance

Special Advertisement Control Area

Green Belt

London City Airport Safeguarding

London City Airport Safeguarding

London City Airport Safeguarding Birds

**Proposal**

- The proposal seeks planning approval for the conversion of the existing barn adjacent to Elm Farm Cottage into 1 two bedroom dwellinghouse.
- The premises at present has a lawful use as a storage building (Class B8) and for craft/manufacturing workshops. This use was granted permission in 1992 under ref. 92/02276. This approval also incorporated an integral carport to serve the main building and provide some stables, along with a further building within the existing holding to be used as livery stables and a store.
- The current proposal seeks permission for a two bedroom property to be provided with a breakfast room and kitchen, lounge, utility room and two bathrooms. A store would also be provided which would be used for purposes incidental to the host dwelling.
- The existing carports would be used to provide two car parking spaces, and no further extensions are proposed as part of the scheme.
- A garden area would be provided to the south of the building and this area would be separated from the open agricultural land that surrounds the curtilage of the site.
- The existing boundary hedgerows and planting would be retained, as would the existing vehicular and pedestrian access onto the road.

## **Location**

The application site is located within the Nash Conservation Area and is also designated as Green Belt land.

## **Comments from Local Residents**

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and the representations received from Nash and District Residents' Association can be summarised as follows:

- consider these buildings are ideal for this development;
- the area of Nash would benefit from another family moving in;
- would be nice to see these buildings used productively.

## **Comments from Consultees**

No objections were raised by Environmental Health or Highways Drainage.

Waste Services stated that refuse and recycling should be left at the edge of the curtilage.

From the point of view of the Highways Engineers, it was stated that as the original use of the buildings are workshops, storage and stables, it is likely that these would have generated vehicle movements. It is considered to be unlikely that the proposal for a relatively small dwelling would generate significantly more trips, and as such no objection was raised to the application subject to suitable planning conditions.

## **Planning Considerations**

It was considered that no significant trees would be affected by the proposal.

The proposal falls to be considered under Policies H1, H12, BE1, BE11, G1 and EMP5 of the Unitary Development Plan.

At national level, it is considered that PPG2 (Green Belts) and PPS7 (Sustainable Developments in Rural Areas) are relevant.

## **Planning History**

In terms of planning history at the site, permission was granted under ref. 92/02276 for a single storey block for storage use, craft manufacturing and livery stables.

## **Conclusions**

The host building is located on Green Belt land and the site also falls within Nash Conservation Area. As such, one of the main issues to consider is whether the proposal will impact upon the openness of the Green Belt location.

Another issue to consider is the conversion of the building to residential, and whether this would result in an unacceptable loss of a business site despite the site being located outside a business area.

The application has been furnished with a statement from Linays Commercial, stating in effect that the premises has been marketed on a rental basis from 2nd March 2010 on a flexible basis concerning both the rental and lease terms. This statement is considered to meet Policy EMP5 (ii) which seeks full and proper marketing of the site where it is found that the site is unsuitable and financially non-viable for the existing use, which according to the marketing agent this has been the case. The estate agent has stated in effect that within the time that the property was being marketed, there were three serious enquiries but for reasons of difficult access for delivery lorries along the surrounding lanes and distance to transport links i.e. railway stations, none of these options were followed up. This confirmation from the estate agent also appears to meet criteria (i) of Policy EMP5 regarding the size, configuration, access arrangements and other characteristics which make a site unsuitable for uses within Classes B1, B2 or B8 uses. Despite the fact that the current lawful use appears to be Class B8, it is clear that there is no clear requirement for this type of use in this particular, and that the narrow lanes surrounding the site and the distance to other transport links appears to provide some problems finding suitable tenants.

Policy H12 relates to the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use where offices and other non-residential buildings are genuinely redundant, subject to achieving a satisfactory quality of accommodation and amenity. Paragraph 4.56 of the Unitary Development Plan relating to this Policy states in effect that where such a conversion is proposed, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that the premises are genuinely redundant. The supporting information from Linays Commercial seems to justify this point. It would appear that it is unlikely that the proposal will lead to loss of employment or prevent the creation of new business or employment opportunities due to the location of the site and lack of agricultural business seeking new premises within the area.

Policy G1 of the Unitary Development Plan refers to the re-use of a building in the Green Belt being inappropriate unless it meets certain criteria. The Highways Engineers have stated that the proposed use should not lead to a greater generation of vehicular movement in the area than the existing lawful use, as such Members may consider that the proposal will not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the open character of the land. In addition as no extensions are proposed to the building, with the scheme involving purely an internal conversion, and the proposal creating a small residential curtilage surrounding the host building as opposed to encroaching onto the agricultural curtilage surrounding the defined application site, Members may consider that the proposal will not have any adverse impact upon the openness of the land nor conflict with the purposes of the surrounding land.

The scheme will not involve extensions to the building, and a structural report has been prepared by chartered surveyors, Bradley Harris Limited, to advise whether the building can be purely converted to a residential dwelling without substantial reconstruction. The report in effect stated that whilst the buildings were built for

agricultural purposes and as such there are always some limitations in respect of the standard of that construction, the buildings have been well maintained in the past and this has prevented significant deterioration. It was noted that whilst some improvement works could be carried out, these works are not uncommon for properties of this age. However, it was considered within the report that there is no evidence to suggest that the buildings are not capable of refurbishment and conversion to a residential dwellinghouse without reconstruction or substantial structural works that would affect the principal walls, floors, roof structures and roof coverings.

In terms of the impact upon the Nash Conservation Area, the test here is whether the proposal will preserve or enhance the wider area. As no extensions are proposed and it will in fact bring a redundant building back in to use, Members may agree that the conversion of the building to residential will preserve the character of the building and prevent the decline of the building, which if left to happen would create a negative impact upon the character of the conservation area.

Members may therefore consider that on balance, the proposal is worthy of planning permission being granted for the conversion of the building to residential accommodation. It has been confirmed by chartered surveyors that the building is capable of being converted through internal works alone and this complies with Policy G1 (v) as the building will not be enlarged therefore will not have a greater impact upon the open character of the land; G1 (vii) as no extensions appear to be required in order to allow for the conversion to residential, G1 (viii) as the bulk, form and design of the building will not be altered; G1 (ix) the proposed use as residential will not include the external storage of materials, plant or machinery; and G1 (x) the use should not have any adverse impact upon the recreational enjoyment or appearance of the countryside as it has been confirmed by the Council Highway Engineers that the proposed use should not generate more vehicular traffic than the existing lawful use.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 11/01483, excluding exempt information.

## **RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION**

Subject to the following conditions:

- |   |                 |   |
|---|-----------------|---|
| 1 | ACA01<br>ACA01R | Commencement of development within 3 yrs<br>A01 Reason 3 years                                |
| 2 | ACA04<br>ACA04R | Landscaping Scheme - full app no details<br>Reason A04  |
| 3 | ACA07<br>ACA07R | Boundary enclosure - no detail submitted<br>Reason A07  |
| 4 | ACC07<br>ACC07R | Materials as set out in application<br>Reason C07   |
| 5 | ACD04           | Foul water drainage - no details submit   |
|   |                 | <b>Reason:</b> To ensure satisfactory means of foul water drainage and to accord with PPS 25. |
| 6 | ACH27           | Arrangements for construction period  |

- ACH27R Reason H27  
7 ACI02 Rest of "pd" Rights - Class A, B,C and E

**Reason:** In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt land, the character of Nash Conservation Area and to comply with Policies BE1, BE11 and G1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

- 8 ACI18 No additional hardstanding  
ACI18R I18 reason

- 9 ACK01 Compliance with submitted plan

**Reason:** In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt land, the character of Nash Conservation Area and to comply with Policies BE1, BE11 and G1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

### **Reasons for granting permission:**

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- H1 Housing Supply
- H12 Conversion of Non-Residential Buildings to Residential Use
- G1 The Green Belt
- BE1 Design of New Development
- BE11 Conservation Areas
- EMP5 Development Outside Business Areas

The application also falls to be considered under associated Green Belt policies of The London Plan, and at national level, it is considered that PPG2 (Green Belts) and PPS7 (Sustainable Developments in Rural Areas) are of relevance.

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the character of development in the surrounding area;
- (b) the relationship of the proposed conversion to the adjacent properties;
- (c) the housing policies of the development plan;
- (d) the preservation or enhancement of the Green Belt;
- (e) the preservation or enhancement of the Conservation Area;
- (f) possible loss of employment on the site;

and having regard to all other matters raised.

### INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 RDI10 Consult Land Charges/Street Numbering

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